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**TOWN MANAGER REPORT
MAY 2013**

State Legislature Issues Affect Your Pocketbook

The last month of this session of the Delaware General Assembly is under way. And, while social issues have dominated the headlines, there are other issues that have a direct impact upon your pocketbook and the ability of your elected local officials to govern. There are both legal and budget considerations, on the state level, that may warrant your personal attention – and a letter or call from you to your State Senator or Representative. You can “track” legislation at www.legis.delaware.gov. The existing State law can be found at www.delcode.delaware.gov.

Streets and Street Lighting Funds to be Cut

The Town of Milton has 11.86 miles of public roads to maintain. Attached to these roads are sidewalks, signs and streets. Title 30, Chapter 51 of the Delaware Code “Motor Fuel Tax” describes the manner in which state aid is provided for the maintenance of streets, etc. The effect of Municipal Street Aid Fund grant has been greatly diminished by both inflation and cuts to the total value. In 2012, the Town of Milton was provided with an unrestricted grant of \$51,018 and a grant restricted to road improvements of \$12,780.

The unrestricted grant is approximately \$18,000 per year *less than* it costs to pay the bill for street lights in our town. And, unless the current course is changed, it is very possible that the modest \$12,780 grant for street improvements will be *cut from the state budget*.

Improvements to streets and sidewalks in the Town of Milton have been identified as a top priority. The proposed State budget cuts will make a difficult task even more difficult by any measure.

Collective Bargaining may be Forced upon Town

House Bill 81 would amend Title 19 of the Delaware Code and result in the requirement that municipalities with at least three employees (a reduction from 25) enter into collective bargaining agreements with their police officers.

Some may perceive that this is the route to improved compensation for police officers. That is the case in some instances, but not in others. The recent contract between the City of Seaford and its officers *did not* result in any significant increase in compensation. There are two things that are certain if this bill becomes law. They are: 1) the legal cost for the Town of Milton to conduct its business will increase by about \$30,000 in the first year (the recurring expense is less), and 2) the ability of management, Council and any Council-appointed committee to have a direct effect on the operations or personnel in the department will be *greatly diminished*.

Council Authority over Police Chiefs may be taken away

House Bill 147 would assign the authority to “dismiss or demote” a Chief to a panel appointed under the auspices of the Delaware Criminal Justice Council. Citizens may continue to elect Councilpersons that share their view. But, the Council will be denied the right to exercise their judgment in such cases.

Hurricane Preparedness

May 26 – June 1 was National Hurricane Preparedness Week and June is National Hurricane Preparedness Month. Please visit www.ready.gov for tips on Hurricane Preparedness!

Every family should build a family supply kit and develop a communication plan – in case you become separated. The following list may be helpful:

- Water (one gallon per person, per day, for three days)
- Food (a three day supply of non-perishable food)
- A battery powered flash light and radio
- A first aid kit and a supply of your daily medications
- A whistle to signal for help
- A dust mask, plastic sheeting and duct tape (in case you must shelter in place)
- Moist towelettes and garbage bags with ties (for personal sanitation needs)
- A “go bag” with a change of clothing, bedding materials, some form of identification and cash

Don’t wait until it’s too late! Prepare now...the Atlantic Hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30. Milton may be several miles inland, but the effect of wind and flood damage is not limited to the coast. There is the likelihood that a major storm will result in power interruptions that last for a week or more, too. Local emergency management is coordinated through the same operations center that handles your local 911 calls. If you are in an emergency, it is best to call 911. The EOC in Georgetown will dispatch your local Police Department, Fire Department or other services, as needed.

Mutual Aid Agreement Between Utilities

Tornadoes struck Oklahoma in May. In addition to the Federal Emergency Management Administration response, there was also support provided by other well-trained organizations. The Delaware Water/Waste Water Agency Response Network (Delaware W.A.R. N.) would provide aid to the Town of Milton in an emergency. This mutual aid agreement is on the Council meeting agenda.

Water Conservation

The Town of Milton has recently achieved its water conservation goal of no more than 100 gallons of water per person, per day (including leaks, hydrant testing and commercial uses). That was before the growing season kicked into gear, though. The consumption of water peaks during the summer months. So, personal attention to Water Conservation habits during summer is more critical than ever.

Each resident or business pays for its water consumption in Milton. Making these tips a part of your every day life will help your budget as much as it will help the town to manage this precious resource.

Try these tips:

- Check for leaks, often. Even small leaks, like a dripping faucet, will amount to thousands of gallons in use, per year.
- Install water-saving devices in your kitchen and bathroom.
- Don’t run the water while you brush your teeth, hand-wash dishes or thaw frozen foods. Turn off the water when it is not in use and use the refrigerator or microwave to thaw foods.
- Wash only full loads of laundry and full loads of dishes.
- Outside, use mulch to retain moisture around landscapes and select plants that do not require copious amounts of water
- When watering your lawn, do it when it is cool and the winds are calm. Use a timer with a shut-off device.
- When washing your car, use a hose nozzle that can be shut off.
- Consider purchasing a rain barrel to capture rooftop run-off for watering plants and flowers.